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ABSTRACT

A Q-sort technique was used to determine whether there were appreciable differences between views of appropriate kindergarten programming held by professional organizations, kindergarten teachers, and elementary school administrators. A set of 52 cards with statements regarding kindergarten program components was developed from position statements on appropriate kindergarten curriculum by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the Association for Childhood Education International, and the Southern Association on Children Under Six. The subjects, 10 kindergarten teachers and 10 principals, ordered the cards from most to least important. Initial comparisons indicated that the two groups arranged the cards in similar ways. McQuitty's Elementary Linkage and Factor Analysis was used to probe for patterns in the similarity of responses. Analysis showed that three types chose inappropriate statements as "most appropriate." Type A seemed to favor authority in the classroom; Type B considered programmed learning to be important; and Type C placed a high priority on test performance. Types A and B were composed of teachers, and Type C was predominantly composed of principals. Teachers and principals appeared to support a view of appropriate kindergarten components that differed radically from the position of early childhood professional and academic groups. (RH)

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THE DISCREPANCY BETWEEN ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL'S AND KINDERGARTEN TEACHER'S VIEW OF THE CONTENT AND PROCEDURES WHICH CONSTITUTE A KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

Mildred B. Vance and Beverly Boals

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INTRODUCTION

This research was an attempt to determine source or sources of the inappropriate kindergarten programs being conducted across the nation. The inappropriateness of activities and demands on children have alarmed the Early Childhood profession to such an extent that professional organizations have developed position papers.

Many teachers experience considerable pressure implict or explicit from a source that certainly has impacted upon their professional judgement regarding appropriate program development. The teachers' knowledge of child growth and development, their knowledge of children as individuals with different backgrounds together with knowledge of the long and short-term effects of different teaching strategies may possibly put teachers in conflict with today's proliferation of standardized test, behavioral objectives and performance standards expressed by society as a kind of accountability. This type of accountability is unattainable and harmful to young children. When teachers are confronted with performance standards cited as appropriate for five year olds which are contradictory to the knowledge base of the teachers, undue pressure, and a breakdown of moral and professional judgement is experienced by teachers.

PROCEDURES

This study used a Q-sort technique for determining if serious differences existed between appropriate kindergarten program as postulated by the professional organizations, and perceived by teachers and building administrators. Fifty-two cards with statements regarding kindergarten program components were developed from the position statements on appropriate kindergarten curriculum written by NAEYC, ACEI, and SACUS. These professional groups are in accord with practices which constitute appropriate programs for young children. Furthermore, NCATE approved teacher education programs also support these theorical components. The conflict of demands does not come from a knowledge base of appropriate programs but is imposed from other sources.

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Twenty-six cards contained statements of appropriate components expressed by the profession and twenty-six cards contained statements deemed inappropriate. Ten kindergarten teachers placed the items in order of preference from most important to least important. Ten principals responsible for kindergarten programs completed the same Q-sort.

Each group was asked to sort from most important to least important in the establishment of a good kindergarten curriculum.

INSTRUCTIONS TO PARTICIPANTS

The 52 cards consist of components and elements found in kindergarten curriculums. Please order the cards placing the components or elements from the most to the least important in the development of a good kindergarten curriculum. Use nine piles placing the appropriate number of cards in each pile.

Design - most important to - least important.

Piles	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Cards	2	4	6	8	12	8	6	4	2

STATEMENTS OF APPROPRIATE AND INAPPROPRIATE PRACTICES

Statements - A - Relating to Appropriate Kindergarten Practices. Some have broad implementations and others specific.

A-1 The time-block set aside for outdoor, self-selected activity should be at least thirty minutes long.

A-2 Young children need many visual art experiences and opportunities for artistic expressions.

A-3 Daily musical activities should be a requirement for kindergarten.

A-4 All types of play should be encouraged in the kindergarten setting.

A-5 Play is the young child's most fundamental procedure for learning.

A-6 Teachers should promote creative and imaginative activities over structured activities.

A-7 The welfare and health of the children should be a main goal of a kindergarten program.

A-8 Kindergarten teachers must promote good community interaction and public relations activities.

A-9 A professional staff member should be on duty when kindergarten children arrive at and depart from the school setting.

A-10 Parental education or involvement should be a goal of the kindergarten program.

A-11 Planning activities that have a high interest level for kindergarten children will produce cognitive development.

A-12 Satisfaction of children's needs and interest is the best deterant for children's misbehaviors.

A-13 Teachers need to understand child growth and development and be able to implement teaching strategies that promote total child development.

A-14 Children should be allowed to disagree respectfully with the teacher.

A-15 Field trips have lasting impressions on young children and should be an important component of the kindergarten program.

A-16 Outdoor play is necessary for a good kindergarten program.

A-17 Rest time is important to the kindergarten program.

A-18 Snacks and lunches should always be of nutritious value.

A-19 "Learning Centers" constitute the best room arrangement for equipment and materials.

A-20 Most of the kindergarten child's day should be in self-selected and self-directed activities.

A-21 Teachers should impose teaching strategies that are incompatable with the child's learning style.

A-22 Learning activities should be varied and flexible.

A-23 Maturation plays a significant role in learning.

A-24 Each child has the desire and capacity to learn that which is significant to him/her.

A-25 Each child is different and his/her differences must be respected and dealt with by selecting appropriate materials and methods.

A-26 Stories and poems should be a daily diet for kindergarten children.

Statements relating to Inappropriate Kindergarten Practices

I-1 Fifteen to twenty minutes is an adequate amount of time to play outside.

I-2 Learning activities with well-stated outcomes should be initiated by teachers and evaluation of results should follow.

I-3 Most of the kindergarten day should be filled with teacher-instigated activites.

I-4 It is important that most of the kindergarten day be spent in large group activities where children are doing the same thing at the same time.

I-5 Sometimes the best way to teach a concept or skill is to utilize a worksheet.

I-6 Purchased model programs such as "Distar" are often superior to any program a well trained teacher could implement.

I-7 Programmed learning activities are superior to unstructured activities in almost every incident.

I-8 Kindergarten children cannot make choices very well; therefore, freedom of choice should be limited.

I-9 Workbooks teach important concepts and should be an integral part of the kindergarten program.

I-10 Since very little learning takes place during free time (learning centers), time for this activity should be limited to 20 minutes.

I-11 The use of ditto sheets is appropriate in the kindergarten class.

I-12 An effective use of rewards and punishment appears to be basic to good classroom discipline.

I-13 Assertive Discipline is a procedure kindergarten children understand and is an effective deterant for misbehavior.

I-14 Kindergarten teachers who are stern but fair get the best results from children.

I-15 Orderly conduct and movement comes from teaching children how to line up and stay in line.

I-16 Making high marks on a statewide test should be one of the main goals of a kindergarten program.

I-17 A kindergarten teacher should be judged and rewarded according to the kinds of scores her/his students attain on tests.

I-18 ABC's (the alphabet) should be taught in kindergarten, and should be a high content priority.

I-19 Following the "teacher's guide" is important to ensure that all children receive the same instruction over specific core materials.

I-20 Teachers should be acquainted with and follow the State Department of Education guide for skill development.

I-21 If more than one kindergarten room exists in a school building, all kindergarten teachers should follow a basic curriculum.

I-22 Showing children models of art projects is good because it assists children in the development of art projects.

I-23 Often the only way to alter children's behavior is by firmly saying "NO!"

I-24 Whole group instruction is the most effective way to aid in skill development in 5-year-old children.

I-25 When the class gets loud, the best way to regain control is to speak loudly.

I-26 The most effective way to move children from one space to another is to form lines.

FINDINGS

A comparison (t-test) of administrators' and teacher's mean responses showed no significant difference in their evaluations of both appropriate and inappropriate categories of statements. The two groups of respondents evaluated the items, on the average, much the same.

McQuitty's Elementary Linkage and Factor Analysis was used to probe for patterns in the similarity of responses. From this analysis, three new "types" emerged; although most of the

response scores correlated quite highly with each other, the members of these three groups, or factors, shared more commonality of perception, on the average, than when compared to others in the study. Each type had one prototype, or reference, who exhibited the characteristics of that particular group most effectively. The groups with their reference prototypes are listed below. The correlation coefficients (Pearson r) beside each group member show the strength of the relationship to the prototype. Below each group column is the number of the Q-sort item that best exemplifies that group's perception of an appropriate component.

Type A (Admin. 3)	Type B (Tchr. 2)	Type C (Tchr. 8)
Tchr. 3 (.81)	Tchr. 1 (.62)	Admin. 1 (.59)
Tchr. 4 (.60)	Tchr. 5 (.79)	Admin. 2 (.70)
	Tchr. 7 (.64)	Admin. 4 (.73)
	Tchr. 10 (.75)	Admin. 5 (.63)
		Admin. 7 (.77)
Most appropriate:	Most appropriate:	Admin. 8 (.68)
Statement I-25	Statement I-7	Admin. 9 (.75)
		Admin. 10 (.32)
		Tchr. 6 (.59)
		Tchr. 9 (.78)
		Most Appropriate:
		Statement I-17

CONCLUSIONS

Types A, B, and C chose inappropriate statements as "most appropriate" (pile number 1) for kindergarten programs. Each group, on the average, seemed to favor one statement that perhaps best exemplifies the group. Type A seems to favor authority in the classroom, Type B considers programmed learned as very important, and Type C places a high priority on test performance. It is important to note that even though three groups emerged from the analysis, two of the three types included both teachers and administrators. It appears that both teachers and principlas concur in supporting a view of appropriate kindergarten components which differs radically from the positions taken by the Early Childhood professional and academic groups.

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